

**Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation****Office of the Chairperson**

Colville Business Council
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MAY 01 2000

April 13, 2000

LTC William Bulen
Department of Army
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

RE Snake River Dam Breaching; DEIS Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Report

Dear Sirs,

The Colville Confederated Tribes would like to first thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the opportunity to comment on the future status of the four Snake River Dams in relation to recovery of salmon and steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act to harvestable levels. This is a subject rooted in a legacy to exploit and control the resources of our waterways and has come full circle to a threshold question: whether the lower four Snake River Dams should be breached or not.

The cultural relationship of salmon and the 12 Tribes of the Colville Reservation is well documented in history and continues in contemporary times. Originally the Tribes fished for physical sustenance. Now we fish for ceremonial and spiritual sustenance wrapped in a philosophy that future generations will have the opportunity to harvest fish as our families did in the past. The Palus Tribe and the Joseph Band of the Nez Perce (two of the 12 tribes on the Colville Reservation) in particular fished for salmon and steelhead on the Snake River and currently CCT tribal allotment established on the lower Snake River.

The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation support the breaching of the four lower Snake River Dams as the best option for recovering ESA listed Snake River salmon and steelhead populations to harvestable levels. We base our conclusion on the facts that many studies have been conducted that illustrate the impacts of dams to the rivers environment and their contribution to decadal trends in the decline of salmon and steelhead populations; and that interim plans to enhance downstream migration by hastening flows as well as collect and transport smolts have proven to be unsuccessful. Further, there is solid consensus within the scientific community that the best option to recover Snake River salmon and steelhead is to remove parts of the four lower Snake River Dams to restore natural river flows. This also has been analyzed as being the most affordable and cost effective option.

- 1 Further, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation oppose representing Lower Columbia flows from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Reservoir. We see this option as only exacerbating existing deleterious conditions to upriver resident fish resources which the CCT must now rely on to meet subsistence fish needs.

Feel free to contact me if there are questions.

Sincerely,


Colleen F. Cawston, Chairperson
Colville Business Council
Colville Confederated Tribes

cc: Deb Louie, CBC Councilmen, Chairman CCT Natural Resource Committee
Joc Peone, CCT Fish and Wildlife Program Manager
Tim Brewer, CCT Office of Reservation Attorney